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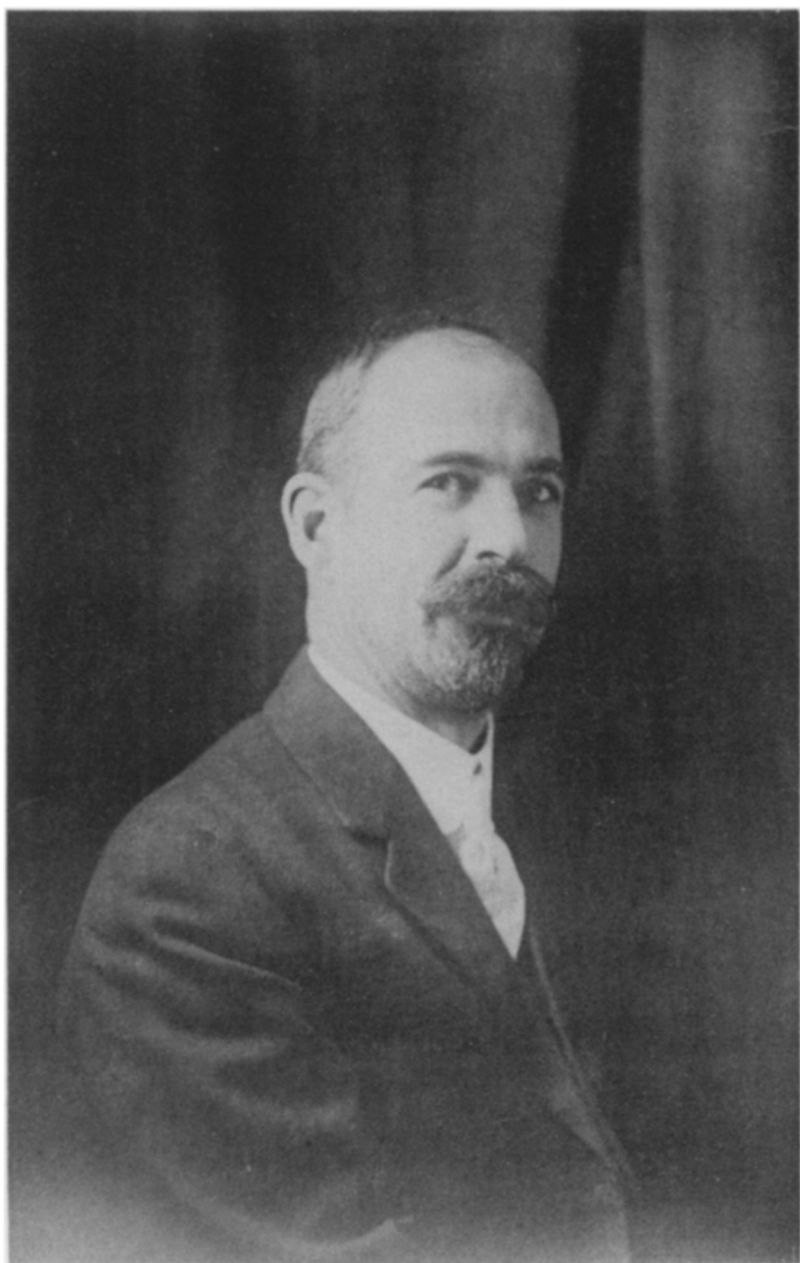
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E. L. Morris.

BULLETIN
OF THE
TORREY BOTANICAL CLUB

NOVEMBER, 1913

Edward Lyman Morris

EDWARD B. CHAMBERLAIN

(WITH PORTRAIT)

The sudden death of Edward L. Morris on September 14, last, is a loss not easy to estimate. He was by preference a student of systematic botany, but long experience as a successful teacher, and active work as a museum curator, gave him a breadth of scientific training and an appreciation of popular and scientific points of view that are not often combined in those whose position makes them the interpreters of science to the public.

Those who knew Mr. Morris feel that their personal loss overshadows everything else. He had to an unusual degree the genial charm of manner that makes and retains friends, and a loyalty that takes no account of time or effort spent in helpful service. His daily life was so full of patience, cheerfulness, and sympathy, that few realized how great, at times, was his own burden. Even when his own life was full of trouble, he was never without the characteristic cordial greeting for everyone he met. With high ideals and the strong convictions that accompany them, he was frank in the expression of opinion, but at the same time modest in statement and considerate of the views of those from whom he differed. The affectionate respect of his associates and the coöperation they gave him are striking testimonials to his own personality.

In his own work Mr. Morris set for himself a severe standard, and demanded like faithfulness from others; yet he worked with

an enthusiasm that enlivened dry detail and routine. Whatever he did showed painstaking method, sincerity of purpose, and devotion. As a colleague has written of him, "He put his heart as well as his conscience into his work." He was a patient investigator and a close observer, but willing to defer any conclusion until he had a first-hand knowledge of the facts. This desire for truthfulness made him chary of publication; there was so often some minor point that required more study for a complete understanding of the case.

The facts of Mr. Morris's life are, briefly, as follows:—He was born at Monson, Mass., October 23, 1870, the son of Edward Franklin Morris and Louise Janette Clapp, and his youth was spent in the vicinity of his birthplace. At as early an age as eleven, he began the systematic study and collection of the plants of the township, continuing his collecting throughout his preparatory school course. Entering Amherst College in the autumn of 1888 from Monson Academy, he was given special credit for the botanical work already done, and an opportunity to continue it in connection with the college museum. During his third and fourth college years he had especial privileges for advanced work in botany and zoölogy, and was in charge of the college museum.

Obtaining the bachelor's degree from Amherst in 1891, he spent one year at the Museum of the Worcester Natural History Society, one year in graduate study at Harvard, and two years as instructor at Amherst, which conferred upon him the degree of M.A. in 1895.

Of his work at Amherst Professor Tyler says, in a letter recently received: "It always seemed as if he was working purely for the enjoyment of it. He was a very hard worker, and made his students work. The best men did so because they caught his spirit, the others because they had to. He made things very clear, and always knew what to tell and how much to leave to the student to find out. He never made his teaching a mere memorizing of dry details."

In 1895 Mr. Morris removed to Washington, D. C., and for twelve years was connected with the school system of that city, for the last seven years being head of the department of biology. His progressive teaching here developed a course in biology

that reached the life and activities of young people. He always taught as if in the laboratory, arousing the interest of his students, stimulating them to seek first-hand knowledge, teaching them that biology was a matter of everyday life, and training them to think clearly and hard. During the year 1907, Mr. Morris resigned his position in Washington to become curator of natural science in the Museum of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, a position which he held at the time of his death. For one year, also, after the resignation of Dr. Lucas, he was acting curator-in-chief. This position gave him the chance to develop the ideas of the educative value of museum collections that he had long held. Believing that exhibition specimens should always arouse the desire for further information, he not only saw that the books furnishing such knowledge were close at hand, but insisted that every visitor should have, if he desired, the opportunity of personal conversation with the curator.

In addition to professional duties, Mr. Morris found the time to take an active part in general scientific work, his own motto for such things being, "Make both tie for first place." In Washington he was a member of the botanical, biological, and entomological societies, and of the Cosmos Club, but most closely identified with the Washington Biologists' Field Club, of which he was a founder and leading spirit. No one who knew him at "The Island" could fail to see how very close to his heart the success of the Club was, or forget how enthusiastically he entered into the plans for its development. Even after leaving Washington he kept in close touch with all that went on at the Club, and never failed to revisit it when circumstances permitted. He had made a large collection of plants from the Club property, which he hoped to make the basis for a detailed catalogue.

For years Mr. Morris's especial pleasure had been the systematic study of the Plantaginaceae, of which he had accumulated a large amount of material, many species being represented by alcoholic as well as ordinary herbarium specimens. It was a source of keen regret to him that increasing duties encroached upon the leisure hours that he preferred to spend upon his collections. The characteristic desire for accuracy delayed the publication of many conclusions that had already been attained,

conclusions that it is hardly possible to reconstruct from the notes available.

Besides what has already been mentioned, Mr. Morris was for a short time associate editor of School Science and an associate examiner on the College Entrance Examination Board. At the time of his death he was editor of the Torrey Botanical Club, of which he had been a member since 1901. In 1898 he collected for the United States National Herbarium on the Florida Keys, and in 1900 was an assistant upon the staff of the United States Fish Commission in West Virginia. For four years he was a special plant expert of the Department of Agriculture, doing field work in Oregon, along the Great Lakes, and in Iowa. In 1908 Mr. Morris was secretary of the Nomenclature Commission of Section G of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and in 1911 was elected a fellow of the Association.

Mr. Morris was twice married, his first wife being Florence Syvret, of Charlton, Mass., who died in 1903. In 1907 he married Mary E. Bedell, of Washington, D. C., who, with a son, survives him.

NEW YORK CITY

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